

Number 105

February 2009

The Baptist Recorder

The Journal of the Baptist Historical Society of New South Wales

Next meeting:

“This is my story” with Rev Ron Baker, outlining his conversion at the 1959 Billy Graham Crusade, and his later life and ministry.

When: Thursday 5 Feb
Where: Faculty Lounge,
Morling College,
120 Herring Rd,
Macquarie Park 2113

Time: 7.30-9.30 pm
Entry: free

Open to everyone.
Supper included!

The ministry of the Reverend John Saunders in Sydney, 1834-1847 (part 2 of 3)

By Rod Benson

In Part 1, published in August 2008, the author outlined the life of Rev John Saunders with particular attention to his pioneer Baptist ministry in Sydney. In Part 2, his actions against alcohol abuse in the Colony are documented. Part 3 (to be published in a later issue) will discuss other aspects of Saunders' commitment to social responsibility, including his advocacy of justice for Aboriginal people in the wake of the Myall Creek massacre.

John Saunders' passion for social action appears to have been as strong as his zeal for evangelical ministry. He evidently viewed neither as ancillary in the life of a Baptist minister. There is no indication that the church members or deacons were of the opinion that their pastor's social activities absorbed time better spent in evangelism, pastoral visitation, sermon

preparation, prayer, and the like. The church acted to alleviate poverty (see Part 3), but this was a financial matter that required ongoing management and discretion. Generally the church focused on worship, prayer, preaching and child education.

The silence regarding Saunders' notable social action may arise from congregational indifference, a desire for separation of the 'sacred' from the 'secular,' or respect for the private judgments of the pastor. Saunders was regarded as a gentleman in the colony who seems to have remained master of his time with respect to pastoral duties and public service.

Narelle Iliffe proposes another reason for tacit church support of Saunders' social action. For many nineteenth century Protestants, moral behaviour, good

works, social respectability and increased wealth were signs of divine grace. Members of the free churches took their faith and ethics especially seriously. Further, as Iliffe observes,

During the 1830s ... nonconformist men and women engaged in new methods of social control which challenged the hitherto accepted right of the Church of England to dictate on moral matters. By advocating sobriety, social respectability and family values the temperance movement helped create a social order which, coincidentally, benefited small-businessmen and tradesmen. It advocated the growth of public libraries and mechanics institutes, encouraging literacy among the lower classes ... John Saunders' close involvement with temperance earned him the respect of the wider community and attracted the attention of business people from a variety of backgrounds to the Baptist cause.¹

Whether small business owners and their employees and families became members of the Bathurst Street Baptist Church because of Saunders' social action and influence is a matter of surmise. However, it is conceivable that his natural talents, nonconformist convictions, social conscience and professional office worked together to the perhaps unexpected mutual benefit of church and community.

The impetus for Saunders' social concern arose before he left England. In a letter dated 13 May 1834, he demonstrated not only a keen pastoral interest in antipodean social life, but also a mind grappling with the spiritual and moral challenges, and the unprecedented opportunities for evangelical witness and colonial progress, which he expected to face on arrival:

Australia affords a fine field of Christian exertion ... the messenger of truth enters into a place where, in

many respects, 'Satan's seat is,' [an allusion to Rev 2:13]; he stands in the gap to prevent his fellow-countrymen from falling back into barbarism, or from descending into the level of degraded and forced-labour population. Moreover, in so doing ... he forms the society of a state rising in extent, in commercial prosperity, and destined to bless or be the bane of many generations.²

The writings of the Rev John Dunmore Lang also influenced John Saunders. A minister of the Church of Scotland, Lang arrived in NSW in 1823 and swiftly "became one of the most influential, determined and colourful figures in the life of the colony."³ Saunders' decision to sail for the Parramatta River instead of the Ganges was apparently inspired by his reading of Lang's *Historical Account of New South Wales*.⁴ He certainly envisaged Christian mission as including the social transformation of the colony against various forms of barbarism, destitution and the degradation of the human person. He saw the potential for good and evil in the common life of the colony, and strove to magnify the good.

In addition to his various Baptist activities, Saunders was active in the Bible and Tract Societies, the Auxiliary of the London Missionary Society, the Temperance Society, and the Benevolent Society.⁵ He took a strong interest in the welfare of Aboriginal people, the abolition of the convict system, the cause of British immigration, and general education and science. As the Rev Wilfred Jarvis observed in the centenary publication of the Bathurst Street Church, Saunders "always gave his ready assistance to the various religious and philanthropical movements then struggling for existence."⁶

There is indirect evidence that these wide interests did not extend to activities of a political nature. For example, there is no

The impetus for Saunders' social concern arose before he left England

reference to his attendance at a public meeting convened on 7 January 1841 to oppose dismemberment of the territory at whose heart lay Sydney Town, although other clergy are listed as present.⁷ Saunders seems to have entertained a strong interest in education and benevolence, and to have had no interest in organised political activities while in Sydney. He was, of course, close to the centre of power through his friendship with Governor George Gipps, the judiciary, senior constabulary and various professional men, which may have offered opportunity for gentlemanly lobbying and advocacy on behalf of social causes.

Temperance

Possibly the most visible evidence of corruption and human misery in Sydney during the 1830s was public drunkenness. Saunders estimated that, in 1832, the year of his arrival, an astonishing 73 per cent of state revenue (of £122,000) was derived from alcohol consumption and associated agencies.⁸ This was also the age of the infamous “rum currency.” The widespread misuse of alcohol, in particular spirits, in turn led directly or indirectly to other socially irresponsible, morally degrading or physically debilitating habits on the part of many in the community. Leading English Baptists concluded that:

It is almost unnecessary to speak of the state of religion in such a condition of society. The few individuals who maintained a higher character were struggling above water amidst a vast whirlpool of iniquity and pollution.⁹

It is unsurprising, then, that Saunders applied himself to the cause of temperance.

In the 1830s temperance was not total abstinence – the latter was advanced by a different association, the Total Abstinence

Society. Temperance advocates were often middle-class professionals and businessmen who permitted the consumption of wine and beer in moderation but abstained from distilled liquors except for medical purposes. Historians have placed Saunders’ active interest in the temperance movement between 1838 and his departure from the colony in 1848, but he assumed a leading role in the Temperance Society in January 1835, within weeks of his arrival at Sydney Cove. The movement itself was in its infancy, having been created in America and Britain in the late 1820s, and in Sydney at about the time of his arrival.¹⁰

The first public action recorded of Saunders in Sydney was his seconding of the following motion by the Rev John Dunmore Lang at a meeting of the Temperance Society during the first week of 1835:

That the abolition of the practice of furnishing merchant vessels with ardent spirits, or employing men who use spirits to navigate them, would greatly promote the interests of the Colony, annually save many useful lives, and much valuable property, as well as greatly improve the moral habits of seamen.¹¹

The motion was presumably carried, and Saunders’ advocacy of temperance in Sydney grew in strength. Early in December 1835, Saunders presented a lecture on temperance to a “very numerous” audience at the home of Mr George Bunn, reiterating the sense of the January motion and demonstrating his detailed knowledge of matters maritime and intemperate. He acknowledged the problem of alcohol abuse in the colony, and perhaps naïvely advocated substitution with “tea, coffee, etc.” He applauded the American mercantile navy’s “great progress” on temperance, and related stories of “deplorable

The few individuals who maintained a higher character were struggling above water amidst a vast whirlpool of iniquity and pollution

calamities which have occurred at sea, solely attributable to the intoxication of the ships' crews." He revealed that several local ship-owners had signed a temperance pledge to discourage the use of "spirituous liquors" among their employees. The newspaper editor wrapped up the account by adding:

We wish these gentlemen every success in their laudable undertaking; but we rather opine, that, if they have not already a sufficient number of 'hands' on board, they will find some little difficulty in making up the compliment from among the Sydney blue-jackets, who are, to a man, 'rum customers'."¹²

On 23 December Saunders delivered a temperance address on board the *Wolf*, a whaling ship berthed at Port Jackson, "at the close of which a number of shipmasters and sailors signed articles – including the whole of the crew of the *Wolf*."¹³ Subsequently the vessel was despatched as the first commercial "dry ship," provisioned with dried fruits, coffee and "other wholesome and nutritious articles" in place of rum.¹⁴ So deleterious was alcohol abuse to the common good that, as the editor of *The Sydney Herald* put it, if money was "said to be the 'root of evil,' intemperance is the trunk, and upon its branches hang the fruit of every other vice ... spreading misery and destruction to the human race."¹⁵ Commissioning the *Wolf* for her new service, Saunders said:

May she return with serenity above, and with peace resting beneath her swelling canvas; may health beam upon each countenance, and joy sparkle in every eye; and while she bears her captain and crew to the Australian shores magnanimous victors of a debasing custom, may she lay the wealth of an *Argosy* at her owner's feet! Thus she will become the liberator of the seamen of this port,

and the successful return of the first Temperance ship prove an illustrious era in the maritime annals of the Colony.¹⁶

Saunders served as Secretary of the Society for many years, and from 1838-40 was founding editor of *The Australian Temperance Magazine*, a monthly publication with a circulation of up to four thousand. In fact, it was Saunders who moved (seconded Dr Nicholson) that the NSW Temperance Society publish a periodical to support its work (one thousand copies, 16 pages, at two pence subscription), to commence from 1 July 1837.¹⁷ Interestingly, the meeting also resolved that "all political and religious controversy shall be carefully excluded" – a preference that matches Saunders' usual mode of operation.

Two years later, amid disquiet over the intentions of Bishop Broughton and Bishop Polding regarding support for the movement, Saunders entreated Society members to remember that "it was the happiness of the Temperance Society that it knows no difference of religion – no party feeling." The motto of the Society was "love one another."¹⁸

Perhaps the most revealing published statement on temperance by Saunders was made at a meeting of the Parramatta Temperance Society on 8 May 1839, where he moved that women be invited to join the movement, and defended the view that spirits were inherently harmful, opining that:

Every plan for the improvement of man and the advancement of morality ought to have the sanction and support of the community at large, and the ministers of religion in particular ... spirit is the work of man and not of God, it does not exist in healthy nature ... spirit is not a good creature of God for the purpose of refreshment – but only in a

the successful return of the first Temperance ship [will] prove an illustrious era in the maritime annals of the Colony

medicinal point of view, and the use of this substance as a beverage is of itself an abuse ...

As to the objection that Temperance usurped the place of the Gospel, [Saunders stated that] Temperance was an auxiliary not a usurper. The Society was founded upon the principle of self-denial, and the holy motive of love to God, and love to man. And if men thought it a Christian duty to support hospitals and benevolent asylums, it was a far higher duty to *prevent the necessity for such institutions*.¹⁹

Also in 1839, Saunders reported to the General Meeting of the Temperance Society that auxiliaries had been formed at Maitland and Port Phillip, and that, if an “efficient agent” could be found, more would be formed at Yass and Goulburn.²⁰

At the same meeting, Rev John McKenny moved that “every minister of religion and every sober person is called upon to exert himself in promoting the objects of the Temperance Society [because intemperance opposed] progress of religion, the education of youth, and the good government of the Colony.” Mr Richard Windeyer seconded the motion, noting that “We cannot expect to have many Saunders’, but we have many ministers, although they may not, like Mr Saunders, have burning words to express their glowing thoughts.” The motion was carried.²¹

On another occasion, at the 1840 Half-Yearly meeting of the Temperance Society, the Attorney-General moved that the Australian colonies found “a temperate community in the Southern Hemisphere.” Saunders seconded the motion and, in

a long and powerful speech against the principle of granting licenses [to sell alcoholic beverages], kept the audience in a laughing mood by narrating a number of pointed an-

ecdotes in his best style. He also adverted to the monopoly which the Society sought to break up, among the publicans by competing against them.²²

Saunders’ editorials for *The Australian Temperance Magazine* provide further evidence of his detailed knowledge of temperance issues and commitment to the cause, though they are not analysed here. Governor Gipps, who normally chaired meetings of the Temperance Society, declared Saunders the indispensable “life and soul” of the executive of the Temperance Society, and described his incessant travelling, lecturing and calling on people to sign temperance pledges.²³

At a meeting of the Society on 8 June 1838, Gipps himself publicly signed the temperance pledge.²⁴ In December 1847, the Sydney magazine *Heads of the People* published a written appreciation of Saunders, along with a fine line drawing, describing him as “The Temperance Advocate.” At his farewell in January 1848, he was praised by Sydney’s gentry as the “apostle of Temperance.”²⁵

There was no unresolved tension in Saunders’ mind between his ministry from the Bathurst Street church and his activities on behalf of the temperance movement. Moreover there is no indication that his church members, to whom he was responsible, and who had the power to dismiss him, disapproved of his strong interest in the cause.

But evidently there was criticism. On one occasion it was claimed that the Temperance Society was unscriptural; Saunders responded by observing that the Bible Society too was not mentioned in the Bible, adding, “Let those who apply this razor shave themselves with it, and they will be pared down pretty close.”²⁶ On another occasion Saunders defended his actions against the charge that he placed the inter-

On one occasion it was claimed that the Temperance Society was unscriptural

ests of the Temperance Society above those of the Christian gospel, claiming that:

The Gospel is the grand moral remedy for the world; it is more, it is the 'power of God unto salvation.' The Gospel is a Divine ordinance, concerned to renew the heart. But the Temperance movement is 'the handmaid of the Gospel.' God has blessed the cause. Many who have turned to temperance have subsequently turned to Christianity.²⁷

There are hints that Saunders addressed the subject of temperance in sermons at Bathurst Street as well as at meetings of the Temperance Society and in other places. For example, in April 1840 *The Sydney Herald* uncharacteristically announced that the Reverend Saunders was to preach a sermon at the Baptist Chapel on the Christian duty of supporting temperance societies.²⁸ Unfortunately we know nothing of the content of the sermon nor the reason why Saunders chose to speak on the topic at that time.

Normally news stories about temperance appeared on page two of the newspapers, under "Domestic intelligence." But on 19 April 1841, the whole of the first page of *The Sydney Herald* was devoted to a report of the Sixth Annual Meeting of the NSW Temperance Society. The most likely reason for this unusual change in editorial policy is that Governor George Gipps, the Society President, took the opportunity in the meeting to render high praise to Saunders, the Society Secretary. In doing so he reveals something of Saunders' humble nature as well as his tireless commitment to the work. In particular, Gipps noted that "the modesty of their excellent secretary" had previously prevented any recording of the manner in which office bearers had discharged their duties; and observed that "it was princi-

pally owing to the unremitting attention and perseverance of the Reverend gentleman (Mr Saunders) that the Society was indebted for the important position which it already occupied amongst our Colonial Institutions."²⁹

Indeed much progress had been made. In a speech to the Temperance Society in July 1841, at the Sydney Mechanics Institute, Saunders (who chaired the meeting) drew attention to "the great change which has taken place in Sydney since the Society had been formed about seven years ago, when he arrived in the colony." Quickly appraising the tragic situation upon arrival, he had initially estimated that it would take twenty years for the cause to succeed, but now he believed "the work would be done" within three years because of "unexpected success" and "a most efficient coadjutor in the Sydney Total Abstinence Society." Also he noted that "several vessels had lately left the Colony with rum as a part of their cargo, it being found that it could not as heretofore be sold to advantage in Sydney."³⁰ Sadly the work was never finished and Saunders continued to fight the liquor trade and its vested interests for the rest of his time in Sydney.

A final comment must be made about the Sydney Total Abstinence Society, of which Saunders was not a member. This Society was formed in September 1838 with eight members, and by May the following year membership had reached 204 and meetings were held weekly at the School of Arts. The Society's primary object was "tee-totalism," or the eradication of all alcohol consumption from the colony. It appears that members of this Society occasionally criticised the Temperance Society and its members, and vice versa. For example, at a meeting of the Total Abstinence Society in May 1839, Rev John McKaeg (Saunders' unofficial predecessor who had been imprisoned for

the Temperance movement is 'the handmaid of the Gospel.' God has blessed the cause. Many who have turned to temperance have subsequently turned to Christianity

unpaid debts and had attempted suicide) addressed the gathering at considerable length. *The Sydney Herald* reported that

[He] advocated the cause because he had derived great benefit from it, having acted upon the principles of the Society two years before the Society was formed ...

[D]runkards are all men of the highest intellect ... a species of Alexanders the Great, who finding the intellectual world not big enough for them to sit down and weep for want of something to employ their ideas, and then take to drinking; the old Temperance Society is not sufficient to reclaim drunkards, it is humbug; it forbids one kind of intoxicating liquor, but allows others ...

If asked what good Teetotalism had done, he [McKaeg] would say look round the room and see the reformed drunkards, but where are the converts of the old Temperance Society, there are none.³¹

McKaeg addressed another meeting of the Total Abstinence Society on 2 July 1839, but there is no record of what was said and that is the last we hear of McKaeg in Sydney.³² Saunders and others sought to avoid wars of words between members of the two societies and, while there were occasional negative comments from time to time, McKaeg's May 1839 tirade was the most extreme comment published.³³

Rev Rod Benson is an ethicist and public theologian with the Tinsley Institute, based at Morling College, Sydney. He serves as Secretary of the Social Issues Committee of the Baptist Union of NSW and Secretary of the Baptist Historical Society.

References

1. Narelle Rosevear Iliffe, "The first fruits: Baptists in New South Wales to about the 1850s," MLitt thesis, University of New England, Armidale, 1997, p. 33.
2. *The Baptist Magazine* 26, June 1834, p. 257.
3. Iain H. Murray, *Australian Christian Life from 1788: An Introduction and Anthology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1988), p. 111.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
6. *A Century of Baptist Witness in Sydney*, p. 10.
7. *The Sydney Herald*, 8 Jan 1841, p. 2. The committee formed to advance the meeting's interests included Rev R. Mansfield and Rev Mr Hesketh.
8. Manley & Petras, *The First Australian Baptists*, p. 19.
9. *The Baptist Magazine* 28, March 1836, p. 113.
10. Ken Manley and Michael Petras state that a branch of the Temperance Society was formed in Sydney in May 1834; see Manley & Petras, *The First Australian Baptists*, p. 59. *The Sydney Herald* of 8 Jan 1835, p. 2, refers to recent meetings of the Temperance Society, described as "in its infancy," at the Court House in Castlereagh St.
11. *The Sydney Herald*, 8 Jan 1835, p. 2. Others present at the meeting included Revs Cowper, T. Hassall, McEnroe and Richard Hill.
12. *The Sydney Herald*, 17 Dec 1835, p. 3.
13. *The Sydney Herald*, 31 Dec 1835, p. 2. A "skeleton" of his lecture was published on the same page.
14. *Ibid.* The only alcohol on board was reputed to be medicinal spirits in the hands of the ship's surgeon.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *The Sydney Herald*, 29 May 1837, p. 2.
18. *The Sydney Gazette*, 13 Apr 1839, p. 2.
19. *The Sydney Herald*, 10 May 1839, p. 2; original italics.
20. *The Sydney Herald*, 12 Apr 1839, p. 2.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *The Sydney Herald*, 21 Sep 1840, p. 2.
23. Manley & Petras, *The First Australian Baptists*, p. 60.
24. This historic pledge was inherited by Saunders' granddaughter who donated it to Sydney's Mitchell Library.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Manley & Petras, *The First Australian Baptists*, p. 61.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.
28. *The Sydney Herald*, 15 Apr 1840, p. 2.
29. *The Sydney Herald*, 19 Apr 1841, p. 1.
30. *The Sydney Herald*, 17 Jul 1841, p. 2.
31. *The Sydney Herald*, 24 May 1839, p. 2. The ten governing rules of the Sydney Total Abstinence Society appear in *The Sydney Herald*, 28 Nov 1840, p. 2.
32. *The Sydney Herald*, 5 Jul 1839, p. 2.
33. These two references to McKaeg, previously undocumented, indicate that McKaeg was released from prison, perhaps in 1837, and may have remained in Sydney for some years. His subsequent movements and date of death are unclear. See Manley & Petras, *The First Australian Baptists*, pp. 38-52, especially note 54.

If asked what good Teetotalism had done, McKaeg would say, 'Look round the room and see the reformed drunkards, but where are the converts of the old Temperance Society? There are none.'

In 2009, to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the first Baptist witness, the Baptist Historical Society of NSW will relaunch its

Essay Competition

Purpose

To encourage research on Baptist people, places, institutions, products and events, especially those related to NSW and the ACT.

Focus

Critical evaluation of significant issues in Baptist history, theology, ecclesiology, liturgy, mission, evangelism, ethics, and culture; or critical evaluation of the life and ministry of a Baptist leader (and/or their spouse); or a subject approved by the Essay Competition Coordinator prior to the competition deadline. Essays must demonstrate the relevance of the research to contemporary Australian Baptist life.

Frequency

Annual or biennial, at the discretion of the Essay Competition Coordinator.

Publicity

Essay competition to be promoted to BHS members, Morling College students, BUNSW church/pastors email lists, *Together in Ministry* magazine, *Mosaic*, other state historical societies, other Baptist theological colleges, and the BHS website.

Essay length

5,000 to 10,000 words (including full footnotes/referencing).

Publication

The winning essay or essays will be published in *The Baptist Recorder*, on the BHS website and in other places where appropriate. Other essays may also be published at the discretion of the Editor of the *Recorder*.

Coordination

The Secretary of the BHS will normally manage the Essay Competition.

Prize

One prize of \$1000-00; or, where there are two high quality entries, two prizes of \$500-00 each, to be determined by the judges.

Judges

The honorary judges shall be the Essay Competition Coordinator and two experienced church historians or other suitably qualified and experienced persons appointed by the Executive Committee of the Baptist Historical Society of NSW. The decision of the judges shall be final and conclusive and no correspondence shall be entered into with contestants. The judges shall reserve the right not to award a prize where entries do not in their opinion meet an acceptable standard of academic quality or written style.

Exclusions

Members of the BHS executive committee and official judges are ineligible to enter. Previous entrants may submit essays in subsequent years provided that a new subject is addressed.

Sponsors

The Baptist Foundation of NSW is the principal sponsor. The BHS may approach other organisations to act as co-sponsors for the Competition.

Closing date

The closing date for entries in the 2009 Competition is **Friday 19 June 2009**.

Submissions and enquiries

Submit your *previously unpublished* essay, together with a cover letter, to:

Rev Rod Benson
Secretary, Baptist Historical Society of NSW
Morling College
120 Herring Rd
Macquarie Park NSW 2113

Archivist's report

by Ron Robb

If you come into the Archives at the moment you'll have to negotiate piles of boxes and bundles. Over the Christmas period records were delivered from Thirroul, Blacktown and Manly churches, with part of Earlwood's records also being deposited. The Baptist Union's relocation from Glebe to Epping resulted in a substantial amount of material, and a couple of personal collections were deposited. The volunteer staff are swamped at present but it's an indication of the good reputation that is spreading.

In fact, the space problem is now becoming quite pressing. We could do with a small donation of, say, \$100,000 to build an extension. In the meantime we will soon have to find an off-site repository for general low-usage storage where we can hold items that are not environmentally critical (though it would still need to be dry and relatively dark and cool). Actually, if we can find a really suitable spot it would help us to meet one of our objectives: off-site storage for anything we hold that is duplicated. For example: our second copies of *The Australian Baptist* and the NSW Year Books require a fair bit of space, while hardware such as movie and slide projectors, tape recorders, Boys' and Girls' Brigade trophies etc also need space that can be used for more perishable material. A spare small secure room in a church or a garage could be examples. If anybody has knowledge of such spare facility close to Morling College, please contact the Archivist.

You can be a scout

The Archives hears from time to time of some church records being discarded, or being held in some family home, or simply having disappeared to nobody-knows-where. Society Members are asked to be alert to this kind of thing. First, church records belong to a Church, or, if the church dissolves, they become the property of the Baptist Union (Thirroul, Leeton and Narrandera are examples of the latter and are now in the Archives). Such material is not the property of some private family because a grandfather or similar was once the Church Secretary. Minute books, particularly, are legal documents and should be carefully kept and accounted for. Current congregations and church officers may have no interest in such records but a couple of generations hence will be very interested in them. One of the most common research requests received in the Archives is personal histories in churches of yesteryear and early church records. Cen-

tenaries are beginning to pop-up now as the early 20th Century saw a rapid growth in expansion. The Archives can help with official records but cannot do so for detailed local history if has not been deposited by an earlier generation.

The Archives is the official repository for Baptist records of all kinds and it has excellent environmental control which is maintained at the standard recommended by the National Library of Australia. On receipt, the material is inspected for vermin and mould while steel pins, staples and clips are removed (to arrest and prevent rust), old sticky tape removed and so on. It is then sorted into standard groupings (or 'series', to be technical), placed in standard archive boxes the content of each identified on the outside then the whole recorded in the data base.. The Archivist is trained and supervises an excellent team of volunteers. It might be noted that many churches now have their records in the Archives and this includes a number of the older, bigger and better known churches.

Some churches are wary of having their records leave the local premises but sad experience regularly shows that eventually that sort of care wanes and the results are inevitable. If a church insists on retaining its records then at least it should appoint a dedicated archivist (not necessarily the church historian but they will often be the same person) at each AGM and give that person a secure stowage facility such as a steel cupboard or filing cabinet, with a lock, in a cool *dry* place. Usually, the Church Secretary is 'lumbered' with the job but s/he is usually too busy to be bothered with such a task and often not the best person for the job anyway. The Archivist is always available to offer help and advice in these matters.

Archives dedication service

Each year the Uniting Archives and the Ferguson Library (the Presbyterian Archives) mount a dedication service for their Archives, alternating between St Stephens in Macquarie St and Scots Church in Margaret St. This year the service will be in St Stephens on Thursday 12th February at 2.00 pm and afternoon tea follows. All other denominational Archives and Historical Societies are welcome and the Baptist Archives usually takes part in the program. All are welcome but the organisers would appreciate notification if planning to come, in which contact the Archivist on 9636 7330 by Tuesday evening please.

Editorial

by Rod Benson

appointed a Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia for service to the community through the child sponsorship programs of Baptist World Aid Australia

This is a year of significant anniversaries. It is 500 years since the birth of the great Protestant Reformer John Calvin; and 400 years since the first formal Baptist witness (the formation of the first church of a General Baptist persuasion, by John Smyth and Thomas Helwys, in 1609). It is fifty years since the formation of what is now Baptist World Aid Australia; and also fifty years since Baptist evangelist Billy Graham held his first Australian Crusade in 1959 (and Sunday 1st February marked the 100th birthday of Graham's longtime friend and fellow minister George Beverly Shea—**photographed below** with Graham at the birthday celebration last week).

Among other major events to mark the four centuries of Baptist life, thought and mission are a conference to be held at Vose Seminary (formerly the Baptist Theological College of Western Australia, in Perth); and the Baptist World Alliance's General Council Meetings in Amsterdam in late July, which will feature many addresses and other events in celebration of what God has done with and through Baptists over the last 400 years. We are all part of that tradition and movement.

In addition, in early July, Whitley College (Melbourne) will host a joint conference of the third Australian Baptist Research Forum

(convened by our own Rev Dr Graeme Chatfield) and the fifth International Conference on Baptist Studies (convened by British Baptist historian Professor David Bebbington); both Graeme and I will be involved in that conference.

On Thursday 7 May, Associate Professor Stuart Piggin from Macquarie University will present an address on the first Australian Billy Graham Crusade in 1959. His topic will be "Billy Graham's Southern Cross Crusade : Evangelistic efficacy and Baptist bonanza." This evening will bring back many memories for Society members of an earlier generation and there will be opportunity for audience participation. More details on Professor Piggin's address will be available in the next issue of *The Recorder*.

Finally, we note with great pleasure that our Society's Vice President, Janine Prior, was appointed a Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia for service to the community through the child sponsorship programs of Baptist World Aid Australia. Professor Patrick Parkinson, who attends Thornleigh Community Baptist Church, received the same honour for service to the law and to legal education, particularly in the areas of family and child protection law, as an author, through contributions to policy reform, and to the community.



100 years ago

from *The Baptist*

A century ago our denomination was served by *The Baptist*, the NSW-based precursor to *The Australian Baptist*, published monthly and edited by Mr J.A. Packer. A 16-page broadsheet, price threepence, it carried church news, denominational leaders' reports, devotional material, obituaries, announcements of upcoming events, letters from readers, and paid advertising. Indeed the front page promoted not one but two brands of cocoa: Fry's ("the best in the world") and Epps's ("a dainty drink for everyone").

The issue of 1 February 1909 led with an obituary of Mr David Ball, a "loyal and devoted worker" at Pinecliff and among the Western churches, "who had firm and strong convictions and did not believe in hiding them under a bushel," and who was known for his "faithful and forceful messages."

There was an article by Dr E.Y. Mullins on John Jasper, "the unmatched negro philosopher and preacher," taken from *The Baptist World*.

Another article by Dr W.J. Dawson was titled, "The law of compassion," and expounded the parable of the Good Samaritan. A third, by Rev Dr Lansing Burrows, was titled, "Great Baptist doctrines," and dealt with church government and the appointment of leaders. The Home Mission Superintendent reported on a recent visit to Temora (see quote on right), and there were separate reports from the Home Mission Society and the Foreign Mission Society.

In addition to many short items of news and information, there was almost a whole column devoted to the first annual meeting of the Baptist Librarians' Association, chaired by Mr Harbutt of North Sydney. Also featured was part two of an original short story by Rev E. Pocknall, titled, "The unconverted rascal."

Notable advertisements included "William White for bread," a half-page ad for Anthony Hordern & Sons emporium, and a promotion of Alderson & Sons "Unfermented Wine."

The young people are responding to our influence, so the next generation will be ours.

25 years ago

from *The Baptist Recorder*

Twenty-five years ago the Baptist Historical Society was commencing its seventh year of operations. The Chairman was Rev Dr Ken Manley; Secretary was Mrs Lorna Ollif; the Treasurer was Mr Michael Petras (who, incidentally, resumed the role of treasurer at our Annual General Meeting in 2008!); the Archivist was Rev E.A. Archer; and the Editor of *The Baptist Recorder* was Mr Hubert Watkin-Smith. The journal was typed and photocopied on A4 paper, as it still is—although we have the advantage of access to computer publishing software today.

What was in this eleventh issue (Jan 1984) of the Society's newsletter? There was information about the next meeting, featuring an address by Pastor Vivian M. Grice (who is now Director of Pastoral Development for the Baptist Union of NSW) on the subject, "The history of the Central Cumberland Baptist Association." There was an advertisement for the new publication, *Extension or Extinction*, selling for \$6.00 plus \$1

postage. There was a record of minutes of the October 1983 meeting, and a plea from the Archivist that "The past must not perish," urging NSW Baptists to pass on valuable historical records to the Society. There were two book reviews by Lorna Ollif—on Anthony Duignan's *Tracing Our Past*, and on her own *Safari to the Centre*. There were several research notes, including information on the conversion and early ministries of Rev John Ham (pastor of the Bathurst Street Baptist Church after John Saunders), based on a funeral sermon preached by Rev Dr R. Ross, a Congregational minister, in the Bathurst Street Church on 15 March 1852. And there was an edited transcript of the October 1983 lecture by Mr Watkin-Smith on "Significant aspects in the history of the Parramatta Church to 1911 A.D."

You can read all this and much more on the new BHS website (www.baptisthistory.org.au)! To quickly locate the January 1984 *Recorder*, go to www.baptisthistory.org.au/journals/tbr

There was a plea from the Archivist that "The past must not perish"

The Baptist Recorder

The Journal of the Baptist Historical Society of New South Wales

Preserving, promoting and publishing NSW Baptist history

President: Rev Bruce Thornton OAM

Vice President: Mrs Janine Prior AM

Secretary: Rev Rod Benson

Treasurer: Mr Michael Petras

Editor: Rev Dr Graeme Chatfield

(this issue edited by Rod Benson)

Archivist: Mr Ron Robb

Mail: Morling College
120 Herring Rd
Macquarie Park NSW 2113

Phone: (02) 9878 0201

Fax: (02) 9878 2175

Email: graemecworking@optunet.com.au

Web: www.baptisthistory.org.au

Notice to BHS members

The Executive Committee of the Baptist Historical Society has agreed to move to a January—December financial year from 2009. This will make it easier for many of us to remember to pay our membership fees, which are now due. Those who become members during the year will pay the same fee and receive back issues of The Baptist Recorder for the quarters they have missed. To renew your membership, use the form below, or pick up a form at the next meeting.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

The Baptist Historical Society of NSW offers a range of services to members including free admission to special events, and free subscription to a quarterly journal. You (and your church) are invited to apply for membership. Please return this form with payment to the Treasurer as soon as possible.

Name: _____ (tick if applying as a couple)

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Membership status: new member current member

Amount paid: _____

Please tick one box: cash cheque

Membership fees:

Ordinary Member (or couple) \$15.00

Concession (student/pensioner) . . . \$10.00

Church \$20.00

(cheques payable to Baptist Historical Society)

Mailing address:

The Treasurer
Baptist Historical Society of NSW
31 Oakleigh Ave
Thornleigh NSW 2120
